Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*: the Vulnerable Gender

Eitetsu SASAKI*

Introduction: Why Gender?

In *Blithedale Romance* (1852), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-64) seems to encourage Zenobia, a proto-feminist, to make a frontal attack on the unfair gender system, the system that formulates the illusive but perseverant binaries of masculinity and femininity; a problematical yet primordial system in the middle-class society of Europe and American in the nineteenth century.[1] Differently put, Zenobia's obstinate demurral against the gender system seems to permeate throughout the entire story. Zenobia, it seems, needs justice to be done. We have reason to suspect, however, that Zenobia is a mere decoy for the narrator Coverdale, a device to deflect the reader's attention from Coverdale and to hide some deeply personal problem of his own. We cannot blot out our impression that Coverdale neatly sidesteps our scrutiny. It looms

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large and irrefutably clear to the reader that Coverdale, the male narrator who theoretically occupies the panoptic position and thus presumably enjoys *omnipotent* power over the other characters of both genders (especially the females), looks un-masculine and *impotent*. Coverdale, it seems, lacks machismo. Coverdale's lack of virility comes partly from his avocation as a poet. In a quarrel with Coverdale, Zenobia banters him about his profession: "You are a poet — at least, as poets go, now-a-days" (170). As the author Hawthorne deplores in "The Custom House" of *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), the men who indulged in writing poetry in nineteenth-century American society were regarded as worthless men. And tantalizingly to these poor men of letters, the total sales of even the canonical male writers [including Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau, and Whitman] never equaled that of a single female best-selling writer (Douglas 96, Gilmore 52-112). In a word, male writers were unmanned twofold: unmanned by the social standard of the day and by the popular contemporary female writers. Returning our attention to Coverdale's way of positing himself in terms of gender establishment, we witness the same deplorable picture confronting the canonical male writers. Though defined biologically as a man, Coverdale is not sanctioned as a genuine man, either socially or professionally. It isn't difficult to assume that the awareness of his own position in the Blithedale community depresses Coverdale; and all the more so in light of the repeated scathing reminders from Hollingsworth that there is "nothing to do in life" "unless to make pretty verses, and play a part, with Zenobia and the rest of the amateurs, in our pastoral" (43).

Coverdale's gender issue in this story, I sniff, might be a covert theme of *BR*.[2] Thus, the purpose behind this thesis is the following. What tactics does Coverdale deploy to acquire his male gender identity? Do those tactics work

to his advantage? In the following pages I will investigate Coverdale's gender problem while considering the inseparable links between the gender conception and class conception. We will read the untold story told by the narrator Coverdale.

II. Coverdale's Failed Attempts to Establish His Gender Identity

One of the obstacles hampering Coverdale's efforts to establish his gender identity is his orphan-like status. With no information about his own family, we cannot but wonder from which family he comes. As the sociologists Kuhn, Wolpe, and Coontz indicate, one's family is a locus in which one's identity is formulated, based on the ideology dominating over one's family. To express the idea from another direction, one only establishes an identity because one belongs to a family and submits to the domestic ideology regulating the family (Althusser 156-86; Leverenz 95). Incidentally, the ideology in question can be defined as a mixture of rhetoric, ritual, and mutual agreement; in other words, an instrument that functions as a code of behavior for the members of the group dominant over society; an instrument that subserves the social integration of the socially dominant group (Bercovitch 635). Here we put the family of *BR* in a historical background. Externally, the nineteenth-century Euro-American societies under imperialism were frantic to both expand their markets and secure steady supplies of raw materials for their industrial products. To cope with the emergent capitalism internally, meanwhile, they laid the foundations of patriarchic societies by concentrating ideological power upon the family (Coontz 176). To win the competitive game in capitalistic society, men were supposed to work outside the family and bring home the bacon, while women were to stay home to make it possible for their husbands

to go outside to work. Hence, there were two separate spheres. Given these historical facts, the power endowed upon the family is far from negligible. As we have noted before, the following fact might put the narrator Coverdale in a disadvantageous position: he has no family by which his identity and social position can be defined. Yet he is cunning enough to turn the table to make his otherwise unfavorable condition into a favorable one. To Coverdale, family is a battlefield. The words by T. Walter Herbert are not far off the mark: "Hawthorne's masterwork embodies his brooding on the interior of the domestic 'sphere,' not as a place of refuge from the conflicts of a selfish world, but as a scene in which psychic and sexual intimacy brings on emotional torments as severe as anything the world beyond might inflict" (182). As suggested earlier, I even guess that, in submerging himself deep into the domestic realm and letting Zenobia vociferously protest against patriarchy (male-centricism) and the patriarchic family, Coverdale's hidden motive may be to avert the suspicion/criticism of the peer Blithedale members and the readers as well. Therefore, when trying to locate Coverdale's ambiguous position, a position in which he endeavors (in vain) for his male gender identity, I assume it appropriate to install a gauging instrument (a coordinate axis) upon the (quasi-)family, upon a battlefield of sorts for Coverdale.

Coverdale's coming to the experimental farm, the Blithedale community, intimates his insatiable yearning for family, and his homesickness upon leaving Blithedale proves this to be true. This insatiable yearning for family clearly evinces the formation and existence of (pseudo-) families in a community where, theoretically, there should be no family at all. Historically speaking, the model of Blithedale was Brook Farm (in operation from 1841 to 1847), the experimental farm managed supposedly on the basis of the communistic

utopian vision of the Transcendentalists. At a glance, a community [Blithedale] of proto-communistic claimers who desperately try to disband families might seem out of tune with, and ill-disposed toward, a person who craves family, like Coverdale. Indeed, "[the Blithedale Community] seemed to authorize any individual, of either sex, to fall in love with any other, regardless of what would elsewhere be judged suitable and prudent" (72). And the purpose in the foundation of Blithedale is "to give up whatever we had heretofore attained [i.e., the gender system and patriarchic family hierarchy], for the sake of showing mankind the example of a life governed by other than the false and cruel principles on which human society has all along been based" (19). Hence, the Blithedale community is a carnival-like sphere which, as Mikhail Bakhtin theorizes, could disturb and potentially nullify the social hierarchy, class and gender included. In addition, as Coverdale himself points out, Blithedale is in part based on Fourierism, the radical though illusory communism which went so far as to force its community to abolish the traditional family system on the pretext that the family has "distorted what are supposed to be the essence of human life, i.e., the sexuality" (Zaretsky 90-91). As soon as Coverdale arrives at Blithedale he is irresistibly attracted to Zenobia's voluptuousness, exposed to the risk of losing his power of self-control [or Emersonian Self-Reliance], and forgetful of the traditional and therefore rigid disciplinary notion of gender and family.

We should be cautious not to jump to the hasty conclusion that it is unpractical and infertile for Coverdale to seek the traditional patriarchic families in the Blithedale Community. From the viewpoint of family, the radicalism in Blithedale is curiously distorted and reversed, even to the point of regressing back into an overburdening conservatism, and thus nurses, and gives impetus

to Coverdale's desire for family. Inside and outside Blithedale alike, we see the hideous family-related schemes designed by those three men, Moody, Hollingsworth, and Westervelt, all married, domineering, and self-centered, insidiously resuscitating the customary patriarchic families so that they may wield the undue patriarchic power and display their overblown masculinity in the capitalistic society of the day. It is small wonder that the community gives an opening to these three scoundrels, given that the apparently communism-based farm is actually reinforcing the market-oriented principle [spirit] of competition, the very social system from which the Blithedale members are trying to escape (Zaretsky 90-91). These men are driven by their insidious mindsets reliant on traditional patriarchy, and Coverdale tries to absorb their mentality, modeling himself upon their patriarchic ways. It thus comes as no surprise that Coverdale can rally his kindred spirits [Moody, Hollingsworth, and Westervelt] within the ambience, the magnetic field inside and outside of Blithedale. Below, we will see how Coverdale, spurred by his tactics to acquire his own gender identity, associates with these three men.

In his young days, when industrial capitalism was still in the making and the aristocracy barely lorded over society, Moody went by the name of Fauntleroy and led a dissolute life of luxury and extravagance. Having directly undergone the fatal blow from the brute forces in the days of Jacksonian Democracy, the blow occasioned by the law of survival-of-the-fittest thrust into the middle-class ideology (or what was to be called as Social Darwinism), he demotes himself from aristocracy to what Marx calls the lumpenproletariat of the metro police. Moody/Fauntleroy winds up placing himself "among the poverty-stricken wretches, sinners, and forlorn, good people, Irish, and whomsoever [are] neediest" in the slum. In a great room of the governor's-mansion-turned

tenement house that fronts "a squalid street, or court, of the older portion of the city," he "pay[s] a weekly rent for a chamber and a closet" to live gregariously "with twenty Irish bedfellows" (184), that is, with one of several integral subgroups comprising the immigrant working class in the American Northeast of the first half of the nineteenth century. According to demonstrative historians (Blumin 149, 201; Gilfoyle 38), the working class of the day lived in the tenement houses in the narrow alleys of the big cities of America. The big cities of the day, as now, could not afford to accommodate the increasing influx of people [immigrants and young people from rural areas (Coontz 165)]. Proprietors bought mansions from affluent families relocating to the suburbs and haphazardly subdivided them into small rooms to provide tenement houses for the poor (Stansell 15).

The middle class surrendered some measure of control to the working class or urban slum dwellers (Trodd 18), as the latter resorted to repeated strikes (Coontz 225) and multiplied in the same geometric progression predicated by the population growth theory of Thomas Malthus (Gilfoyle 35). If the miniature but ideal hierarchy in society could be embodied and sought, as G. M. Goshgarian asserts (72), in the patriarchic family, where the paternal figure played a leading role in almost all kinds of management, then who would take that paternal role in society? The answer is the bourgeois class: "the surveyor/superior" to "the surveyed/inferior/working class/slum dwellers." In the same vein, Coverdale takes a(n) (un)consciously self-deceiving measure to prove his patriarchic status/masculinity by occupying the surveyor's position and acting as the father substitute.

If the expression "act as the father substitute" sounds rather irritating, it does so mainly because we cannot verify whether Coverdale truly belongs to

the middle class. In fact, there are three reasons to believe that Coverdale is somehow related to the young, working class men called *Mose the Bowery B'hoy*: first, he is completely free from dependants and other encumbrances to his freedom; second, he surrounds himself with lots of luxurious goods; third, he can live smugly in apartment houses built exclusively for young bachelors working in the big city. Yet Coverdale is different from the *Bowery B'hoy*, in that class-wise he occupies a position closer to the bourgeois and remoter from the working class to which the *Bowery B'hoy* belongs. Whereas the *Bowery B'hoy* makes up for his feeling of frustration over his failure in cultural and academic sophistication by cultivating showy personal manners and adornments (Stansell 89-101; Gilfoyle 105; Blumin 111), Coverdale is intellectually talented and fortunate enough to occupy a culturally privileged middle-class status in which he can write as many poems as he likes without performing the daily backbreaking task of earning a livelihood.[3]

In his aspiration for and his (fake) capacity as a representative of the middle class, i.e., the paternal figure, Coverdale accomplishes his duty of policing the family of the slum dweller Moody. This otherwise improper way of peeping into another's family was officially justifiable, given that the influential slogan of the day, "the domestic field is inviolable" (Trodd 12), applied only to the middle class and not to the slum dwellers or working class (Coontz 210-13; Stansell 64-68). While plausibly impersonating both a superintendent and a pseudo-paterfamilias of the middle class, Coverdale helps Moody maintain the latter's masculinity and resuscitate the latter's collapsing patriarchic status, and thereby tries to prepare the ground for gaining his own masculinity or patriarchy-based male gender identity. For the moment, we will probe into the inquiry through which Coverdale acquires the information concerning Moody.

Moody has fathered two daughters, Zenobia and Priscilla, from his young deceased wife. Zenobia, his eldest daughter, has an elegant dwelling house in the town. As the narrator Coverdale reports, her parlor is filled with "more shapes of luxury than there could be any object in enumerating," and Coverdale is "dazzled by the brilliancy of the room" (168). Zenobia is as exhilarated with her financial power as her father [Moody] once has been. Nothing in her parlor hints at the wretched lifestyle of her father. In the scene with Zenobia alone in her parlor without her father, the narrator and reader imagine the picture of a baby smugly suckling milk from its mother's breast as much as it likes, inattentive to the presence of its father. As I have said, Moody has squandered all of his finances and has had to entrust his daughter Zenobia to his rich brother. If he had retained his financial power, Moody could have kept his position as an aristocratic patriarch. But in his current life in capitalistic mass society, his former prestige as a masculine patriarch, a patriarch demonstrative of a masculinity (albeit a sham one), is on the brink of extinction (Leverenz 85). If we follow the Freudian interpretation of the myth of Oedipus, the tragic Greek King who winkles his own eyeballs as a self-punishment for unknowingly wedding his own mother, Moody's "patch over one eye" (8) symbolizes his partial castration (not a full castration, as one of his eyeballs remains intact). This intimates Moody's impotency, lack of virility, and ruined patriarchal authority. When it comes to the problem of absence of father in family, we cannot but remember the biblical description of the collapsing primogeniture in which the second born son Jacob and his mother Rebecca design a plot against the blind and senile patriarch Isaac. Rather than borrowing the story directly from the Bible, the author of *BR* gives a slight twist to the biblical story by interjecting the strife of the sibling and their father: first, the

prize for which the family members [i.e., Moody and Zenobia] fight in *BR* is not the patrimony that the father Moody no longer retains, but the inheritance of Zenobia's foster father, i.e., Moody's deceased brother; second, the plot against the patriarch is not brewed by the second born and his mother, but by the firstborn Zenobia and her virtually divorced husband Westervelt.

By expressing his anger at his own daughter Zenobia, or by "shak[ing] his uplifted staff" (93)—the staff symbolic of the phallus, Moody tries in vain to show off his masculinity and regain patriarchic power. One source of his indignation at his eldest daughter is her arrogant treatment of her younger half sister Priscilla, treatment befitting to "maid servant" (91), but this does not appear to be the only source.

For one thing, Zenobia exploits Priscilla without Moody's permission, now that Priscilla lives with him. Moody could regard his own second daughter Priscilla as something like his personal property, while Zenobia deprives Moody of Priscilla. This is akin to depriving Moody of his last resort for subsistence, since Priscilla seems to be prostituting herself both for her own livelihood and that of her senile father, Moody. Priscilla's purse makes her possible role as a prostitute all the more convincing: the purse that she makes to sell, or the purse that opens itself commensurately with the financial power of men is strongly remindful of a woman's vulva (Martin 134).

For another, we must consider the significance of the séance show that Zenobia holds with her ex-husband Westervelt by exploiting Priscilla as a soothsayer and medium between this world and the beyond. The séance of the day was considered to be closely relevant to menstruation and fertility, or the mythical biological process of women that should and could be demystified and kept under men's control by the aid of science or by disciplinary masculine

power (Basham 99). By the power of science, men (mis)believed that they could prove their male gender to be superior to their counterparts'. With the help of Westervelt or the weird, magician-like man mock-reverentially called "Professor" (200, 201, 202), Zenobia twists Priscilla round her finger and extracts profits from Priscilla's aura of unearthliness [mysterious female sexuality] at the séance. To the eyes of Moody and Coverdale, Zenobia's conduct effectively robs men of the exclusive prerogative by which they can embody female sexuality, and by extension robs the biological father Moody of the patriarchic prerogative by which he can control his daughter's sexuality. No wonder, then, that Moody is enraged. Coverdale, who proclaims himself to be a protector for the patriarchy, should necessarily forge a close alliance with Moody. In coping with this as a narrator, Coverdale devises a specific discourse to represent Priscilla [the father-dependant daughter] in order to support Moody's crumbling patriarchic family. Hence, Coverdale provides backup logistic support to Moody.

Incidentally, middle-class gentlemen of the nineteenth century had the well known custom of taking slumming trips to hunt for sexual prey (Stansell 181). The middle class of the day also took it for granted that that almost all the girls of slum-dwelling class would sell their own bodies to earn livelihood for themselves and their families. The middle class, especially those involved in social reform movements, were thus likely to relegate and confine almost all of these girls into a class of wretched beings who should be pitied (Stansell 73-74, 147, 190; Gilfoyle 148). On the pretext of propelling forward the domestic reform movement, the middle class was emboldened to step into the slums to keep close watch over the lower class and reaffirm their own superiority and identity as the middle class (Stansell 67-75). The urban lower class,

meanwhile, alleged and reiterated as their conventional method the plausible tear-jerking narrative concocted and imposed upon them by the middle class, and thus managed to throw themselves to the mercy of middle-class philanthropists (Stansell 139, 192). Moody himself takes part in this foxy behavior of the lower class. In fact, Moody speciously relates to Coverdale [the seemingly middle-class young man] that the gentleman [Westervelt] who has frequented the slum and visited its resident Moody is nothing other than a pimp-like imposter-capitalist who picks and chooses possible female factory workers and inveigles the father [Moody] into letting go of his beloved daughter [Priscilla]. Coverdale momentarily takes Moody's story on trust but later dismisses the possibility that Priscilla truly could have lived in the slum as a teenager. Coverdale does so in order to purify and promote her into the status of an inviolable "Domestic Angel," the icon of the adorable middle-class housewife. Coverdale actually confesses that the image of Priscilla built up by Coverdale, i.e., Priscilla as the wretched seamstress (a euphemism for prostitute, though) (Lefcowitz and Lefcowitz 139, 192), has no semblance to her real being and is nothing but "the fancy-work with which [he] [has] idly decked her out" (105).

To sum up, Coverdale takes two steps. First, he tailors Priscilla's image primarily into that of a slum girl who manages to survive a scant living, or the image of a praiseworthy girl who supports her father by sewing/prostituting. Second, by holding Priscilla's image as a girl submissive to her father and as an auxiliary to patriarchy, Coverdale empowers the fragile patriarchy of Moody and thus reinforces his own ambiguous masculinity. By way of the second step, he slightly alters his initial maneuver, the maneuver based on the presumption that Priscilla is a slum teenager whore/seamstress helping her

father, and instead begins to idealize her as a Domestic Angel to-be in the middle-class patriarchic family. Priscilla, needless to say, is far from capable of understanding how forcibly the political manipulation is imposed upon her by the young man, a person she neither likes nor dislikes; for she is merely endowed with "her simple, careless, childish flow of spirits" (74).

Can we safely say that Coverdale's tactics of representing and tailoring Priscilla's image are sufficient and effective? Let us put him in the historical context. Some middle-class men of the nineteenth century were desperate to deprive women of their sexuality. Threatened by the physical assertiveness and overwhelming power, both metaphorical and political, of female sexuality, these men went so far as to remove their clitorises of women. Cautious of the proto-feminism movement of the day, men imposed upon the middle-class women the image of passionless (a euphemism describing the nature of women devoid of corporeal desire and self will). In exalting these women for their disinclination to show female sexuality [womanliness] or their own opinions, the men discursively produced the so-called domestic women to be emulated by middle-class housewives as the ideal. Priscilla, described by the narrator Coverdale as the ethereal being, should and can be the very impersonation of the ideal middle-class woman, the domestic angel who should not allow her sexuality to be showy. Ironically, however, her unfavorable slum life has made her an underdeveloped girl and deprived her of mature female sexuality (Stansell 47-48; Jones 7, 95). Thanks to her apparent ethereality and mysterious inspiration, Westervelt, her exploiter, explains to the audience in the séance show that "she could hear the desert wind sweeping over the sands as far off as Arabia; the icebergs grinding one against the other in the polar seas; the rustle of a leaf in an East Indian forest" (202). A problem arises, however.

According to this logic, how can we deny that Priscilla is unable to pick up the clamor of the proto-feminist Zenobia, the clamor silenced by the narrator Coverdale as a retribution against Zenobia for casting doubt upon the justifiability of patriarchy? If Zenobia's disapprobation ends as merely a vibration of Priscilla's eardrum, then Zenobia's defiance would be somehow permissible to Coverdale and patriarchic figures [Moody, and as we shall see, Hollingsworth and Westervelt]. In fact, no one can deny that Zenobia's voice may be amplified in Priscilla's eardrums, and Zenobia may raise a standard of revolt against Coverdale at any moment. Since occultism in the nineteenth century is closely related to the feminism represented by Margaret Fuller (Basham 40-52), it stands to reason that "[Priscilla's] air . . . and the expression of her face . . . had a resemblance to what I [Coverdale] had often seen in a friend of mine, one of the most gifted women of the age [i.e., Fuller]" (51). Here we can observe three equations, each setting down a delicate balance between the variables [characters] on each side.

(1) Zenobia≒Priscilla (both as sisters with different mother)

(2) Priscilla≒Fuller (both as occultists)

(3) Fuller≒Zenobia (both as feminists)

These three equations can lead to the concluding formulation that Coverdale would not want to see: (4) Priscilla≒Fuller≒Zenobia, thus threatening to destroy the binary system (see below, table I), the system that presumably sustains the patriarchy.

Table I.

Priscilla's character	Zenobia's/Fuller's character
Domestic Angel, submissive and trustworthy to men	Medusa to be conquered by men, infatuated with feminism
infantile, lack of sexuality	"womanliness incarnated" (44), mature, sexual icon
the Pale Maiden	the Dark Lady

The breaking of the binary dynamics in Coverdale's discourse implies that the gender-wise other beings (women) can be no longer put under the control of Coverdale. Up to now, Coverdale has produced the so-called phallocentric discourse and indiscreetly (mis)believed in his monopolizing power as a narrator/second-rate-poet-turned narrator. Up to now, he has flattered himself with the assuredness that he can successfully overcome his apparent drawbacks —by profession, his unauthoritative position as a second-rate poet, and by lineage, his unknown family status. His confidence crumbles and his domestic tactics become ineffective.

Next we will try to ascertain the effectiveness of Coverdale's domestic tactics and delve into the tactic Coverdale uses to draw Hollingsworth into his alliance. Coverdale sees Hollingsworth as a man preparing to make his own family. "[W]ith a pencil and sheet of paper, sketching the facade, the side-view, or the rear of the structure, or planning the internal arrangements," Hollingsworth diligently draws up plans for a correctional institution. From Coverdale's perspective, Hollingsworth appears to be doing so "as lovingly as another man might plan those of the projected home where he meant to be happy with his wife and children" (56). In the Euro-American societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a prevalent analogy between

middle-class patriarchic families and social institutions (including reformatories). Patriarchic institutions were supposed to be systems where authoritative paternal figures presided (in theory, if not always in practice), and thus were modeled after patriarchic families (Foucault 496, 510-12, 527). The extreme case of the patriarchic family, meanwhile, could take the form of polygamy. A polygamous stink has in fact already exuded from Hollingsworth in *BR* (Martin 135): with his charisma, or male pheromone if you like, Hollingsworth attracts Zenobia and Priscilla around him and brainwashes them into becoming his helpers, collaborators, and admirers. Coverdale may draw an accurate portrait of Hollingsworth's, as both Coverdale and Hollingsworth, as Coverdale probably senses, apparently pursue the identical goal of organizing a patriarchic family. There is also, however, a minor but hardly negligible difference between the two: Hollingsworth is supposedly a patriarchic entity already endowed with rationality [rationality was considered a manly attribute in Euro-American society of the mid-nineteenth century] or the quality presumably monopolized by men. Put differently, Hollingsworth is a patriarchic figure into whose care beings such as criminals, madmen, and vagrants could be entrusted. Incidentally, these socially weak beings were compared to those in adolescence that must be put under the protection of adults (Stansell 37). This crucial difference enables, encourages, and authorizes Hollingsworth, not Coverdale, to meet the request of the minister in town, the request to protect Priscilla in the custody of the Blithedale community. Thanks to this request, Hollingsworth is qualified to institutionalize the teenager prostitute into the Blithedale community, or the big reformatory to be (Martin 137). Unlike Hollingsworth, Coverdale is not expected to behave like a trustworthy patriarch. Worse still, he is deprived of any possibility of becoming a patriarch of

a family, primarily because he is excluded from the (quasi-)family. He laments that "The intenseness of their feelings gave them [Hollingsworth, Zenobia, and Priscilla] the exclusive property [meaning sacred inviolable middle-class family] of the soil and atmosphere, and left me no right to be or breathe there" (214). In time, Coverdale is apt to bear a grudge against the affectionate family, the inviolable sanctified place, the private space completely shut away from the outside world (Pfister 49-56; Stansell 41; Coontz 193, 210-13); or, from a different perspective, the breeding ground for Freudian family psychoanalysis. He whines about his outsider status: "I—though probably reckoned as a friend by all—was at best but a secondary or tertiary personage with either of them" (70). Coverdale dreams a somewhat pathological dream: "Hollingsworth and Zenobia, standing on either side of my bed, had bent across it to exchange a kiss of passion. Priscilla, beholding this—for she seemed to be peeping in at the chamber window—had melted gradually away..." (153). In deciphering this we might draw from the Freudian proposition that during the dreams experienced in a semi- or un-conscious state, one is likely to contrive to fulfill one's unrealizable desire in the real world. In his dream, Coverdale desires to drag Priscilla down and exclude her from the symbolically privileged position in the (quasi-)family. Smugly, he thinks he is qualified to occupy the place of the only child between the parents, Zenobia and Hollingsworth. In the dream he remains in that position, peeps into the sexual intercourse of the parents, Zenobia and Hollingsworth, and thus probes how, despite and because of his orphan-like status, he is born. In his dream or unconscious realm, Coverdale playacts as a son to Hollingsworth and reveres this man whose "deep eyes beamed kindly upon me [Coverdale], as with the glow of a household fire that was burning in a cave" (71). As Freud postu-

lates, the son [Coverdale] models himself after and merges with the father [Hollingsworth] to establish his male gender identity, and unconsciously puts Freud's theory into practice.

In the eyes of Coverdale, nobody in Blithedale is equal to Hollingsworth in satisfying the condition to playact as "a father (substitute) (=condition 1)." Doing so will enable him to embody "the middle-class (=condition 2)" "male gender (=condition 3)" of the day. Hollingsworth intends to occupy the position of patriarch-analogized director in the reformatory he plans to build (=meeting the condition 1), so that in the institution he may put into practice the middle-class working ethics of Max Weber (=condition 2), i.e., the very principle of capitalism in the apparently communist-based Blithedale and in the nineteenth-century society of America. Hollingsworth is recognized, both by himself and others, as qualified to duly implant the definition and significance of masculinity into the self-proclaimed third-rate poet Coverdale (Leverenz 89), into the man without any clear and practical "purpose in life, worthy of the . . . self-devotion—worthy of martyrdom" [the purpose in question can be likened to a job suitable for the paterfamilias to support his family] (133) (=conditions 1, 2, and 3). Hollingsworth exemplifies this middle-class work ethic as a master artisan managing domestic industry, endowed with spine to train apprenticeships[-analogized criminals] in (the Reformatory) at Blithedale, though in contemporary circumstances the master artisan could be predicted to be eventually demoted out of the middle class into the blue-collar class (Coontz 168; Stansell 6). Moreover, (the image of) Hollingsworth, a blacksmith by profession dealing with semi-permanent inorganic materials like iron, could be a striking antithesis to the (image of) mother reproducing organic beings (Bromell 83, 108; Pfister 29-33) (=condition 1 and 3), and

this could conversely confirm his virility. Coverdale is attracted to such a man endowed with these ideal attributes, and the motivation to imitate and identify with such a man is imposed upon him.

Then, how effective are Coverdale's (un)conscious tactics to merge with Hollingsworth in acquiring male gender identity? The answer seems to be unpromising for Coverdale, for the following reasons.

First and foremost, Coverdale cannot but suspect Hollingsworth's inclination for homosexual love. This is a hindrance to Coverdale's endeavors to establish his male gender identity, which he unquestioningly assumes is based on the clear-cut binary, i.e., the heterosexualism. Indeed Hollingsworth "look[s] quite as much as a polar bear as a modern philanthropist" (26), "with his great shaggy head, his heavy brow, his dark complexion, his abundant beard, and the rude strength with which his features seem[s] to have been hammered out of iron, rather than chiselled or moulded from any finer or softer material" (28). This description by Coverdale, however, depends on an erroneous gender stereotypical image; in a word, no other than a conventional male image (Leverenz 165). Endowed with feminine tenderness, Hollingsworth transcends this image of macho barbarity or the gender wise stereotypical image: "there was something of the woman moulded into the great, stalwart frame of Hollingsworth; nor was he ashamed of it..." (42). Thus, it is not without reason that Coverdale becomes unknowingly enamored and goes so far as to confess his love to Hollingsworth: Coverdale beseeches "Hollingsworth to let nobody else enter the room, but continually to make me [Coverdale] sensible of his own presence by a grasp of the hand" (42). Thus, Hollingsworth's homoeroticism and ambiguous gender are disruptive of the gender binary where the gender is supposed to be established only if it has its

distinctively differentiated counterpart, and this disruption utterly confounds Coverdale, a man who depends on Hollingsworth for his own fixed attributes of the masculine gender. Coverdale "fortif[ies] himself" (134) from Hollingsworth's symbolical proposition for homosexual intercourse, though tempted to give his consent to Hollingsworth, who snuggles and murmurs to him: "[T]here is not the man in this wide world whom I can love as I could you. Do not forsake me" (132). Coverdale has to narrowly check himself at the very critical moment, when, under the spell of alluring homoeroticism that Hollingsworth emits, Coverdale is prone to forget his initial aim, the aim to gain the gender based on the heterosexually binary gender system. Coverdale is about to (unknowingly) barter this aim for his hidden repulsive desire to homosexually merge with Hollingsworth.

From the very beginning of the communistic experiment by the Blithedale members, only women and physically weak men are charged with "the domestic and indoor part of the business": "To bake, to boil, to roast, to fry, to stew, —to wash, and iron, and scrub, and sweep, —and, at our idler intervals, to repose ourselves on knitting and sewing, —these . . . must be feminine occupations . . ." (16). This division of labor, or the concept of the *separate spheres* in Blithedale, reflects the fact that the community is imposed on the nineteenth-century typically middle-class gender notion, or the ideology that men should go outside to bring home the bacon and women should stay confined in the domestic sphere (Coontz 210-31; Bromell 77). The Blithedale community is an echo, similitude, and extension of the heterosexually/patriarchally arranged family, which is traditional but accommodating to the demand of capitalistic society, i.e., the divided labor system. And yet, "the footing on which [they] all associate at Blithedale [is] widely different from that of conventional society

[/family]" (72), in that Blithedale is fraught with radical communism or progressivism. Blithedale produces an atmosphere where the social notions of gender and class disintegrate, and thus "seem[s] to authorize any individual, of either sex, to fall in love with any other, regardless of what would elsewhere be judged suitable and prudent" (72). This wide latitude in sexual behavior allows even homosexual love. In theory, the Blithedale community is a pre-capitalistic self-sufficient organization founded on Fourierism. The purpose of the community is to retrieve what Marx designates as a pleasure in working by re-uniting production and consumption, the two fundamental facets [the pleasure of working and that of consuming] completely separated in modern capitalistic society. It thus comes as no surprise that the Marxian pleasure derived from the working place of the Blithedale community, from the community composed of the gender-wise separate spheres, the community lax in sexual behavior and tolerant even of gender perversion, is homosexual love in the case of two men [Coverdale and Hollingsworth], both working in the same place, perspiring and involved in physical labor, the labor categorized into the manly (Bromell 77).

The second reason why Coverdale's (un)conscious tactics to merge with Hollingsworth ultimately fail in establishing male gender identity has to do with a historical fact of the day: in the age when the white-collar began to hold hegemony (Coontz 187-90; Blumin 66-107), a man's dedication to physical labor was not necessarily the equivalent of masculinity (Blumin 127). By this reasoning, Hollingsworth's physical labor doesn't necessarily warrant his masculinity; hence, Hollingsworth loses the manly value that enables Coverdale to admire him. In the white-collar mindset, corporeality should be controlled by the power of the machine civilization or by rationalities attributable only to

grown-up educated men (Bromell 50). Though one could imagine himself in "[his] shirtsleeves, and with the sleeves rolled up, to show [his] muscular development" (129), he could not fulfill a necessary and sufficient condition for his masculinity. Still worse, that kind of physical machismo/eroticism could easily slide/transmute into homosexuality and threaten to fundamentally overthrow the present gender system.

Having touched upon Coverdale's failure to locate himself and Hollingworth in the position of heterosexual patriarch and to endow himself and Hollingsworth with masculinity, I will investigate Coverdale's final plan to make an ally of Westervelt.

Westervelt is a detestable guy. With "enough of sarcasm to be offensive, and just enough of doubtful courtesy to render any resentment of it absurd" (90), Westervelt is called "Magician" (110). Despite his repulsive and enemy-like appearance, Westervelt wields a charismatic power over Coverdale. Despite his Oriental attire ["Oriental robes, looking like one of the Arabian Nights" (199)] and physical features ["His hair, as well as his beard and moustache, was coal-black; his eyes, too, were black and sparkling" (92)], Westervelt is true to his name (composit of "Wester(n)" and "Welt [World in German]"). He represents the dominance of Western imperialism over the Oriental World. Symbolically speaking, the slum girl Priscilla, the séance showgirl with a veil over her face, is one of the ill-gotten gains acquired by the imperialist [Westervelt] in the distant places or colonies he has visited. Priscilla's aura, mysterious and oriental, is commercially profitable; a worthy spectacle for Westervelt's show for the middle-class audience from nineteenth-century rural New England. Unlike us living in the twenty-first century, the rural audiences of Priscilla's day had little access to exciting com-

mercial entertainments. Speaking of her non-western mysteriousness, her inexplicable telepathy is rumored to give her the ability to communicate with those in outlying districts, those peripheral places doomed to be subjugated by the West, like Arabia, the Arctic Ocean, and East India. I should mention here that in the development of capitalism, the imperialists may have been (mis)understood to be genuinely masculine men (Takaki 280-89). Whether a capitalist or not, Westervelt appears, particularly to the eye of Coverdale, to possess the kind of masculine gender attribute that Coverdale lacks. This adequately explains Coverdale's irresistible and unconscious attraction to Westervelt. Strange to say, Westervelt appears to be an *other* being somehow oxymoronically *identical* with Coverdale, a being who laughs together with Hollingsworth "because a part of my [Coverdale's] own nature showed itself responsive to him [Westervelt]" (102). In associating with this *identical other* being, Coverdale unwittingly reveals to light his secret; that is, his *own* desire is typified and impersonated by the detestable being [Westervelt]; that deep down in the inner recesses of his [Coverdale's] mind there abides Westervelt, that detestable *other* being.

Just like Westervelt, "whose voice represent[s] that of worldly society at large" (101) [here, the society is interpretable to be middle-class], Coverdale wishes to occupy the patriarchic position in the white-collar middle-class family. Of course, we need to look back at the business circumstances of the day, when confidence men cultivated their attire and behavior with meticulous care, acted overbearingly, and disguised themselves as middle-class gentlemen (Halttunen, 1-55). We must remember that Westervelt acts just like a confidence man when he "disclose[s] a gold band around the upper part of his teeth, thereby making it apparent that every one of his brilliant grinders and

incisors was a sham" (95). We thus think it quite dubious that Westervelt, whose "wonderful beauty of face . . . might be removable like a mask" (95), is truly a middle-class gentleman; and yet given the historical fact of the day, Westervelt somehow belongs to the social category made up of the white-color middle class. Even in this white-collar middle-class society, the Puritan work ethics of diligence had been eroded and replaced by the deceiving technique by which men could manipulate the impressions they made upon others (influencing others with the images they projected) to survive in the competitive capitalistic market economy (Douglas 69; Leverenz 84-85; Takaki 81-84). Westervelt, as a mock-entrepreneur, appropriately flaunts his (erroneous) masculinity and proves himself to be an Emersonian Self-Made Man (Leverenz 84; Douglas 12). In contrast to Coverdale's unrefined (fake) masculinity symbolized by "a rough hickory stick" (90), Westervelt's masculinity (fake as well) is symbolized by "a stick with a wooden head, carved in vivid imitation of that of a serpent" (92). That stick could symbolize a phallic power, a power wielded over the sophisticated wealthy white-collar middle-class family (Martin 135). With the air of an imperturbable patriarchic, Westervelt easily outdoes his wife Zenobia (Leverenz 56), to whose notice "the relation between the sexes is naturally among the earliest to attract" (44). Westervelt overmasters the proto-feminist who "[makes] no scruple of oversetting all human institutions" [one can interpret the "human institutions to be overset" as institutions based upon the gender system] (44). Under the justifiable but misused pretext of patriarchic privilege, Westervelt exploits all of his family dependents: his wife Zenobia as an assistant to the show, and his sister-in-law as the object to be made into the show. Coverdale envies Westervelt, who is indeed a so-called Self-Made Man (albeit one exploitative

over his inferiors) and who impersonates the very image that Coverdale is desperate to don himself.

These analyses of Westervelt tempt us to reckon it wise and cunning for Coverdale to imitate patriarchic behavior à la Westervelt and adore Westervelt as a "Professor." In fact Coverdale observes the Blithedale members "through his [Westervelt's] eyes, more than my [Coverdale's] own" (101). We should be wary, however, of hidden yet fatal drawbacks to Coverdale's scheme of allying himself with Westervelt. To symbolically allow another being to cohabit one's mind, or to go a step further, to psychically [homosexually] merge with another being, one might infringe the standard of Self-Reliant heterosexual manhood, the norm applied only to nineteenth-century middle-class white men (Stansell 21-22), or the foundation to support their assertion of manhood. In the end, Coverdale's apparently successful plan to forge an alliance with Westervelt could be expected to ironically collapse the myth of self-reliant, self-controlling, and self-sufficient (independent) man. And still worth, this demystifying process forces Coverdale to resign himself to the fate that "[o]ur souls, after all, are not our own" (194).

One becomes mixed with the other being to such an extent that one can no longer separate or differentiate oneself from the other. This phenomenon, according to the psychologist and feminist Julia Kristeva (72-74, 95-96), equates with enfeeblement of patriarchy and consequently brings forth a horrible gynecocratic chaos. Indeed, Westervelt wields almost omnipotent mesmeric power, or the power of life and death, over the innocent girl Priscilla and the proto-feminist Zenobia. Yet this omnipotent male[/patriarchic] power over life, death, and women may ironically remind Coverdale only of the functions and characteristics specific of and exclusively attributable to women:

reproduction and resilient animus (vital force). In this way, Westervelt's (/Coverdale's) gynophobic power conversely reinforces the possibility of gynarchy and eventually threatens to render Coverdale incapable of gaining masculine gender through his (un)conscious maneuver of teaming up with Westervelt to fortify a patriarchic family. This interpretation of Coverdale's failure might be further augmented and made more convincing by the way Coverdale the narrator himself represents Westervelt: a "Magician" (110); "a bearded personage in Oriental robes, looking like one of the enchanters of the Arabian Nights" (199). Westervelt's appearance implies that he cannot fulfill the condition to impersonate the ideal image of the Anglo-Saxon man, i.e., the manhood that Coverdale covets and idealizes. You need not to wait for the indication by Edward W. Said (56-57, 67, 187-90), who maintains that Western civilization analogized the Orient to, and relegated the Orient into the position of, women: women to be tamed and contained by the power of the manly and rational West. Despite his name Westervelt [=Wester(n)+Welt (World in German)], Westervelt could be far from the Western World. He is anything but the ideal Euro-American patriarch who Coverdale should imitate or identify with, and thus he gives a fatal drawback to Coverdale.

Consequently, Coverdale's plan to take advantage of the three (mock-) patriarchic families, Moody's, Hollingsworth's, and Westervelt's, proves to be an utter failure.

Conclusion: Escape from Gender

After failing in his struggle to acquire male gender identity, Coverdale learns that in spite of having been historically and culturally conditioned and perpetuated, and in spite of having been a significant driver behind the devel-

opment of capitalism, the binary gender system is not so stable as he might have expected. Ultimately, all he does to establish his male gender identity through his recourses to the patriarchic family system is to bring forth circumstances fatally disadvantageous to him. Now is the high time to reconsider the power of the white-collar middle-class patriarchic family from a different perspective. As Sarah Hale, one of bestselling female writers of the nineteenth century, boldly asserted, American culture would be further refined by the housewife (to-be), the housewife who would willingly turn into the so-called sexless/passionless "domestic angel." By extension, American culture would be further refined if man became womanlike, and closer and closer to the "(domestic) angel" himself (Douglas 108). It is thus credible that by the time Hawthorne depicted Coverdale, the apparently patriarchic family had already been recast into the mother's dominating family or the mother's empire in the culture of American society under capitalism in the making (Douglas 13, 74-76; Stansell 146). American culture in those days was being *feminized* and pandered to middle-class women. These women are referred to as both the consuming middle-class women and the producing women in the market economy, i.e., both the consumers as educated housewives in the patriarchic middle-class families, and producers as their spokeswomen, best-selling female writers who lavishly eulogized the mother-centered family (Douglas 13, 72-74, 95-96).

At this point, the only road open to Coverdale seems to recede from the battlefield, i.e., the domestic realm. Despite his "inactive years of meridian manhood" (247), despite his staying alive to expose the ugliness of old age, and despite the difficulty he probably contends with to maintain his boyhood innocence, Coverdale remains a bachelor to avoid making the questionable

middle-class patriarchic family, and thus continues to act out the role of eternal boy, or the (anti-)hero, in American myth. Coverdale adamantly refuses to be a father/patriarch, and thus mopes away his cheerless bachelor life, foreclosing any kind of love or possibility of reproduction.

Notes

1　*The Blithedale Romance* is hereafter cited as *BR*. All subsequent references to this story will be parenthetically included in this thesis. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance,* vol. 3 of Centenary Edition, eds. Roy Harvey Pearce et al. 3rd ed. (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1971).

2　T. Walter Herbert also discusses gender by way of the author's own problem. I, meanwhile, will discuss gender by way of the narrator's problem.

3　"The 'fancy man of the lower million' was most often linked to the Bowery. Known for his 'bloody bulldog spirit,' the 'Bowery B'hoy' was young, working class, independent, and rowdy. Writers like George Foster and John Vose portrayed them as revelers in pugilism and prostitution. 'The gambling house, the house of prostitution, the groggery,' insisted Foster, were 'the habitual sphere where he expen[t] his active life.' The family, for these men, was 'a myth'" (Gilfoyle 105).

"'These "B'hoys" had fashions of their own . . . they were the most consummate dandies of the day,' Abram Dayton, born into the prestigious old Knickerbocker elite, amusedly recalled. The Bowery Boy made up his costume according to a precise code of dress. . . ."

Although the Bowery Boy was an aggressive working-class character, he drew his identity from an awareness of set of cultural images rather than a common workplace experience. His class consciousness was distinct from the organized labor movement. The Bowery flowered after the Panic of 1837, when New York's assertive labor organizations of the 1830s had collapsed. . . . [The Bowery Boy] defined himself through his use of leisure time. In an after-hours world, he created commonalities through dressing, speaking and acting in certain ways, al-

ways . . . holding himself 'ready for excitement'" (Stansell 90-91).

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Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance*: the Vulnerable Gender

Eitetsu SASAKI

In *The Blithedale Romance*, almost all the protagonists can be subsumed in the framework of family, except the narrator, Coverdale whose lineage is utterly unknown to us as if he were an orphan. Paradoxically, this suggests that Hawthorne wants to show how significant the function of family is. The nineteenth century's social movements directed both inward and outward should be noted: while they went abroad aggressively to Asia and Africa for the expansion of market under burgeoning imperialism, domestically they focused their ideology upon their own families and reinforced the system of patriarchy as the ideal to cope with the following social upheavals, i.e., the development of capitalism, the birth of a white-collar middle class, the increase of urbanites, the inflow of immigrants and so on. Family is the place where ideology formulates the members' identities, and conversely their identities are nothing but the products made out of submission to ideology. Though family is so important place, Coverdale does not have one. Then, looms a question before him. How can he establish his own identity, especially, that of gender?

Why gender? Because, first, it is not so difficult to imagine that Coverdale feels annoyed in acquiring masculinity since he, the poet, does not engage in "manly" occupation. His annoyance is quite natural seeing that the author, Hawthorne, deplores, in "The Custom House" for the preface of *The Scarlet Letter,* the tendency of the nineteenth-century American society not to regard writing as a "manly" occupation. Second, we can not deny that Coverdale's strife for masculinity is subtly related to Zenobia's persistence in attacking the base of society, i.e., the relationship between men and women, the gender

system including that of a patriarchic family.

Under the utterly unfavorable condition that he has no family to belong to, how does Coverdale try to establish his own gender identity? He exploits the three men who appear to maintain their own patriarchic family, Moody, Hollingsworth, and Westervelt, and tries to achieve his masculinity by observing and supporting them. The result is, ironically, only to induce the denial of his own masculinity: dissolution of the phallocentric discourse by his persistence to the stereotypical way in representing women, homo-eroticism that threatens gender differentiation, matriarchic chaos that shakes the order of reason upon which relies the system of patriarchy and that blurs the distinction between the subject and his other counterpart, destruction of individualism based on manly self-reliance. Perhaps, we must call to mind some femin ists' indication that the patriarchic family upon which masculinity depended for its premise had already become vulnerable and feminized as the space became monopolized and controlled by women. Forced to abandon his strategy for masculinity, which is applied to the families, he thus keeps celibate, relinquishes the hope for a paterfamilias, and continues to play the role of an eternal boy despite middle-aged ugliness.